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"CALF MOUNTAIN" MOUND IN MANITOBA

By HENRY MONTGOMERY

IN September last (1909) I excavated an ancient artificial mound, which for many years has been known to the residents of Southern Manitoba as "Calf Mountain" (fig. 5). This mound is situated on a natural ridge in Manitou County. It is nearly circular, is about eighty feet in diameter and ten feet in height. Openings had been made in it by other persons some years ago; but these had been filled in such a manner that very little damage had been done in respect to the preservation of the remaining contents of the mound. During my investigations thirty days' labor in digging were expended upon this mound. My excavations brought to light nine burial places within a circular area of about thirty-five feet in diameter, and under conditions which point to the mound's having been built in portions at different times. These conditions

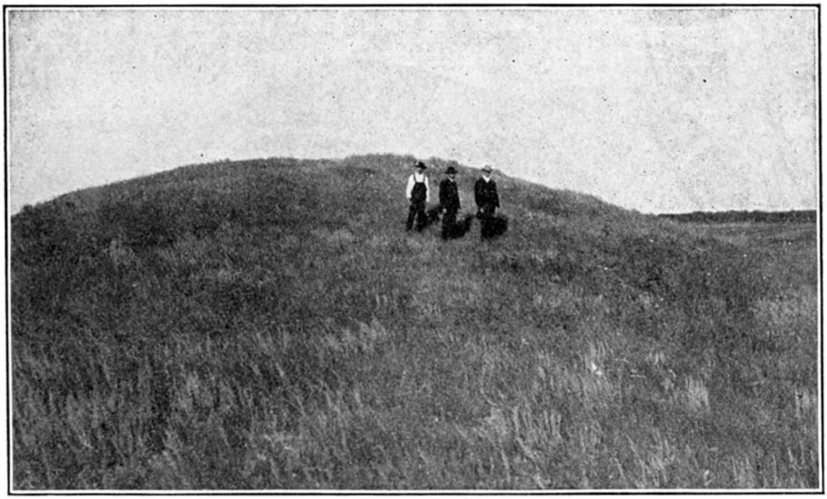


FIG. 5. — Calf Mountain Mound on Mr. E. H. Stevens' Farm, Darlingford, Manitoba. Excavated by Henry Montgomery in September, 1909.

are, firstly, the difference in the state of preservation of the remains in the various burial places, and, secondly, the presence of many layers of limy matter at different levels and having different inclinations or curvatures.

It is my purpose here to give a brief description of the interior of the mound, or that portion of it which had not been previously described. In each instance the strata and interred objects are mentioned in order as they were found by digging from the surface vertically downwards.

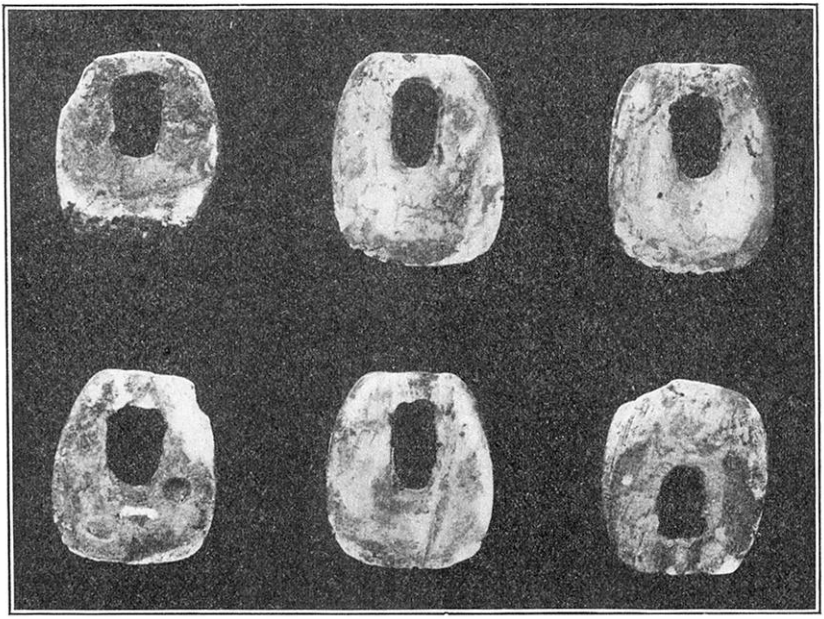


FIG. 6. — Shell ornaments, natural size. Made from marine shells.

Burial No. 1: At the surface a tough sod and black soil were met; about a foot and a half deep was found a calcareous layer from 4 to 6 inches thick; below this was soil; then a calcareous layer; after which came more black soil in which a bone bead occurred; then at a depth of eight feet below the surface there were six buffalo skulls in a heap together; and under these skulls were fourteen large stones. Under these stones were three human skeletons and a roll of birch bark, all being much decomposed.

Burial No. 2: As before, black soil occurred; then a calcareous layer; then black soil; then at a depth of seven feet another calcareous layer of six to eight inches in thickness was found; then more black soil; and at a depth of eight and a half feet below the surface there were six buffalo skulls found together; and beneath these skulls were nine stones, which rested upon one human skeleton, badly decomposed, broken and crushed, along with many flat, oblong shell pendants, all greatly decomposed.

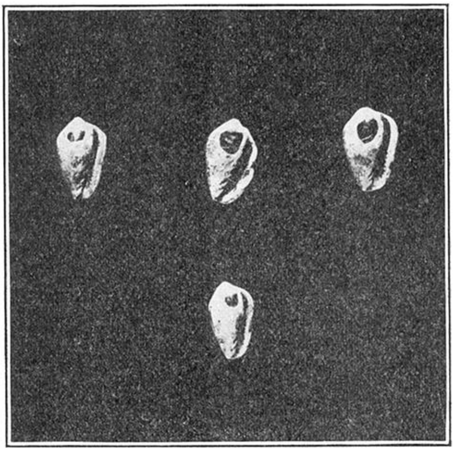


FIG. 7. — Beads of marine shell, *Marginella apicina.*

Burial No. 3: Black soil at the top; then a calcareous layer; then black soil; then four buffalo skulls; under which were twelve large stones; and under these were three human skeletons along with twelve flat, elliptical shell beads about an inch in length and having a rectangular opening, all these being greatly decomposed; there were two circular shell beads and three marine shell beads (*Marginella apicina*) not so much decomposed (see figs. 6 and 7). Below the skeletons and beads was black soil in which another calcareous layer occurred for a short distance.

Burial No. 4: Black soil; a calcareous layer from eight to ten inches thick; four buffalo skulls were found about two and a half feet below the surface; then eight stones, and under the stones were the following: five human skeletons; four copper beads (now copper carbonate), the copper sheet having been rolled around a string or cord of tanned deer hide, and the copper salts having stained many of the human bones a deep green in color; one large birch-bark basket with holes or stitches around its margin and where the pieces were joined; one piece of tanned hide, probably deer skin; one bone object an inch and a half long, probably an arrow nock, which is shown in figure 8. The latter has a hole in one end for the tang of the arrow, and a cleft or slit in the opposite end for the bow string. Beneath these skeletons and manufactured objects there was more black soil and underneath it a calcareous layer from six to eight inches thick, and then black soil above the original surface of the ground. There were two distinct, well-defined calcareous layers, one of which was three feet higher in the mound than the other. Burial pits one and two were beneath the lower layer, and pits three and four were between the upper and lower calcareous layers. These layers ranged from six to ten inches in thickness.

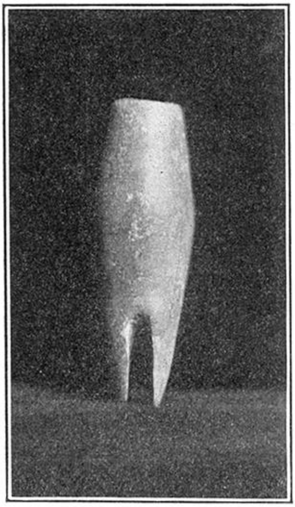


FIG. 8.—Bone Arrow nock, natural size.

Burial No. 5: Black soil; a calcareous layer; then about two feet below the surface occurred eleven pairs of buffalo scapulæ (no stones here); then two human skeletons; three copper beads (now altogether changed into copper carbonate); three shell beads, circular in shape; one bone armlet with holes for fastening it on the arm, and also notches and nine grooves for decoration. The notches are in fives and sevens upon the margin. A little fur of a beaver was present. Several of the bones were deeply stained green by the copper ornaments. One of these copper beads is three and one half inches long and three eighths of an inch wide. These beads are similar to the copper beads found by me in the years 1887 and 1889 in the Dakota mounds.

Burial No. 6: Black soil; a calcareous layer; black soil; then about two and one half feet below the surface three buffalo skulls (no stones here); two human skeletons without heads; one bone armlet in position around the radius and ulna bones of the forearm. This armlet has holes for fastening it in position upon the arm of the wearer, and grooves and notches of decoration.

Burial No. 7: Black soil; a calcareous layer ten inches thick; black soil; then two and one half feet below the surface were found:

two buffalo skulls and one buffalo scapula (no stones) beneath which were two human skulls in fairly good condition, excepting that the zygomatic arch was broken and the lower jaw wanting. One skull has scratches or knife-markings on the frontal bone, and the other has them on the occiput, indications of a secondary burial. About two feet west of these was found a large, perfect, grooved stone maul of gneissoid rock, the groove extending all around the stone.

Burial No. 8: Black soil; a well-defined calcareous layer; black soil; then, at about three feet from the surface, were found one buffalo skull (no stones here), a few small bones of a child, one piece of birch bark, one marine shell bead (*Marginella*) of the same kind as those found in burial pit No. 3 of this mound.

Burial No. 9: Black soil for two and a half feet; then a calcareous layer; then more than two feet of black soil; then about five and a half feet below the surface were found two buffalo skulls (no stones here) resting upon one human skeleton in position with all bones articulated and in a crouching posture, and one marine shell bead about an inch and a half long made from the columella of the marine shell, *Busycon* (or *Fulgur*) *perversum.*

The shell articles in the various pits were doubtless procured by trade from the Gulf of Mexico, and the copper from Michigan, both distant sources of supply.

Not including the crumbling decomposed remains incapable of removal, the "Calf Mountain" mound during the period of my operations upon it yielded: Twenty-eight buffalo skulls; twenty-three buffalo scapulæ; forty-three large stones in four burial pits; twenty human skeletons; fourteen kinds of manufactured objects of shell, copper, bark, hide, bone, and stone; charcoal and charred wood; broken bones of deer and buffalo. Four of the burial pits had both buffalo skulls and large stones covering the remains, and the buffalo skulls were always above the stones. Four of the pits had buffalo skulls alone covering the remains. One pit had buffalo scapulæ alone covering the remains. But in all cases either one or two calcareous layers occurred above the pits and at a distance of from one foot to four feet from the pits. These layers were circular; they varied from about eight to twelve feet in diameter, and exhibited arches or curvatures of different kinds, or arcs of different circles. These overlapped in several places without touching each other.

More than twenty years ago, so long ago as the year 1889, at the Toronto meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science I called attention to the presence of a layer of yellow clay in ten mounds near Devil's Lake, North Dakota, where for several years I had been carrying on investigations. An abstract of my paper was published in the Proceedings of the Association for that year, and from it the following is taken: — "There is, perhaps, a third kind of burial mound in this district. But, as yet, I have been unable to make a separate class for it. Its chief distinguishing characteristic is the possession of a layer of yellow clay two inches thick, which extends through the greater part of the mound and seems to overlie many human skeletons. It may possibly correspond to the covering of the vault or pit described in the first class. In this kind, however, no real excavation occurs, and the layer of yellow clay is found two or three feet above the surface of the ground. For convenience sake it may be temporarily placed between the two preceding classes until other mounds of similar character shall have been carefully studied. I have explored ten mounds of this kind."

A similar description of this structure occurs in my paper "Remains of Prehistoric Man in the Dakotas" read before the Anthropological Society of Washington in March, 1906, and published in the *American Anthropologist* (Vol. 8, No. 4), that same year. In a paper upon "The Archeology of Ontario and Manitoba" read by me last August before the Anthropological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, an outline of which appeared in a recent number of the *American Anthropologist* (Vol. XI., No. 3, page 472), I described the structure of a burial mound in western Manitoba which contained one large, well-defined calcareous layer, and one yellow clay layer about two feet above the former.

But, here in "Calf Mountain" mound there were many burial pits and many such whitish calcareous layers. I found nine burial places. The number found by those who first opened this mound is not known to me; but probably there were two or three found by them. This would make at least eleven burial places in the one mound.

The exact number of calcareous layers could not be determined because of the previous operations upon the mound, but I have concluded that in all probability there was one for each burial place. There were certainly as many as six. Other broken pieces may or may not have been continuous with any of these six. If they were never connected with them there must have been nine layers over the nine burials. The layers at higher levels formed portions of larger circles than those at greater depths, and in several parts of the mound they inclined at different angles and also to a variable extent overlapped. These conditions seem to indicate a growth of the mound in size and direction by each additional burial spot selected, the calcareous protective covering of the burial pit being made to suit the size and form of the mound at that stage of its growth or period in its history.

The condition of the human bones and the objects of handiwork found with them also give evidence in the same direction. Those found at lower depths, although much better and more securely protected from the atmosphere and moisture, were much more decomposed than those found at higher levels. The difference in the state of preservation was very marked indeed. It was not possible to save much of the remains found at the lowest levels.

If we assume that this mound contained the burials of successive generations of the same family, and that each burial place received the remains of one generation (which there are reasons for believing), and we also assume that the period of the active use or receptivity of a burial pit occupied about forty years, a mound of this size possessing about a dozen burial places would require nearly five centuries for its completion. This time may seem to some to be too great, yet it would scarcely be sufficient to account for the difference in the condition of the mound's contents. This conclusion is reached by a comparison with remains from elsewhere whose date of interment is known.

Again, if we consider the quantity of the water supply at the present time, consisting of one very small pond of brackish water a quarter of a mile distant and another small one nearly two miles away, and we compare this supply with what must have been in that locality during its occupation by these prehistoric people, it appears reasonable to believe, that at least a thousand years must have elapsed since the first burial took place in this tumulus. It is, of course, not necessary to assume, that, in the construction of this mound or of any burial mound everything was done with the greatest regularity and accuracy as to time or to the remains interred. Postponement of burials sometimes occurred, and this occasionally led to second or secondary burials. Doubtless on some occasions the remains of others not the immediate members of the family were also admitted. But generally the burial mounds in the Dakota states and in Manitoba must have been erected in this manner, each mound growing in size by the burial of each generation.

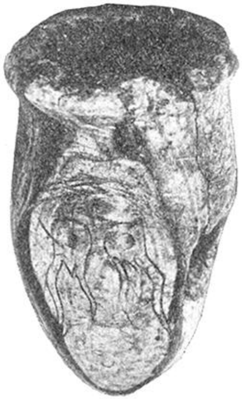
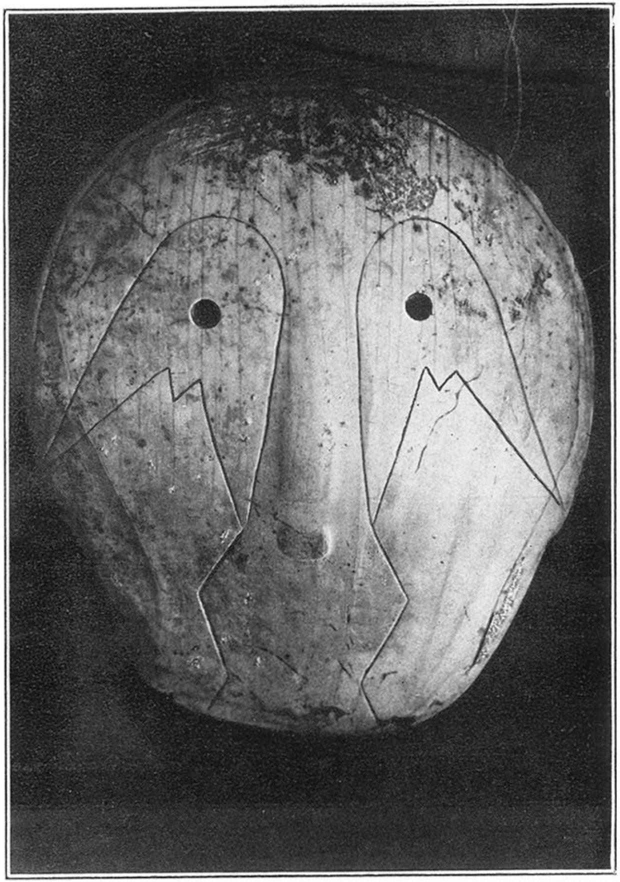
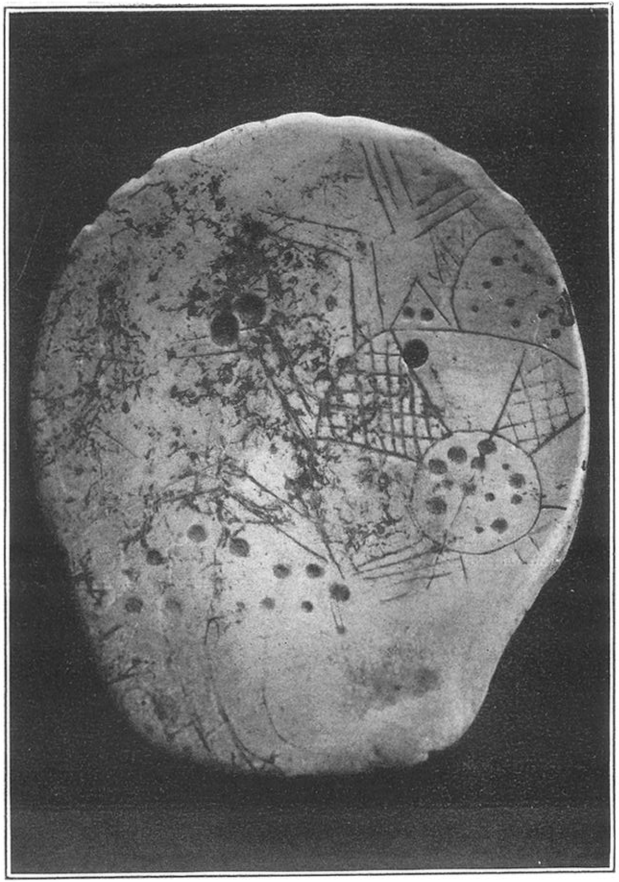


FIG. 9.—Onyx pipe-bowl with human face-mask. Found in Ontario, Can.

In this tumulus there was discovered another object which ought to be mentioned here (see plate III). It is a carved and sculptured shell, found in the dirt that had been thrown back into the trench by the persons digging here in former years. There can be no doubt that it was originally a part of the contents of a burial pit. The article in question is a piece of a large heavy marine shell, most probably the univalve, *Fulgur perversa*. It measures four and one-eighth by four and five-eighths inches (10.3 by 12 centimeters). Perhaps the chief interest attaching to it is that it belongs to a class of engraved and sculptured shell objects which are characteristic of the southern mounds, and are almost entirely confined to Tennessee and Virginia. While very similar to five or six objects taken from mounds in these two southern states it differs from them to some extent in the details of the carving and also in having carvings upon both its sides. It has a human face mask upon the convex surface, with a groove outlining the face, a sculptured nose, a raised node instead of a mouth, perforated eyes, and peculiar zigzag lines on the cheeks. These are nearly but not quite as they are seen upon two or three specimens from Tennessee. It



Shell object, convex side having a human face-mask, showing nose and mouth node less perfectly than seen on the original.



Concave side of shell object. About two-thirds natural size. Much worn; but showing remains of carvings of probably a mythical creature, a combination of a man, a turtle, and a beaver.

also greatly resembles the face mask on the bowl of an onyx marble pipe from the province of Ontario, excepting that on the pipe (figure 9) eyebrows are present, the mouth node or eminence is wanting and there is no grinding or sculpturing of the nose, the innermost incised lines having been placed closer and made to indicate the position of the nasal organ. Whether or not this face was intended to represent a mourning mask worn at burial ceremonies, the zigzag lines showing the course of tears running down the cheeks, or that these lines represent the form of the painting or of the tattooing of an individual or of a tribe is not known. Owing apparently to wear, the figures cut upon the concave surface of the shell are very indistinct in some places and in a few spots are altogether obliterated. In other parts, however, they are quite distinct, and, although differing, they exhibit some resemblances to one or two from Tennessee which have been figured and described by Dr W. H. Holmes in his "Art in Shell of the Ancient Americans." This is the second large marine shell bearing an engraved human face mask which has been found in Manitoba, one having been taken out of a mound by me during the summer of 1908. In connection with same other features of Canadian archeology the finding of these *Fulgur* shell carvings indicates that these prehistoric people were probably contemporaneous with those of Tennessee and the vicinity.

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